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Q&A WITH DR. LOPEZ: A LOOK INSIDE COUNSELING

Interview Conducted by Linsey Liao ’22

Dr. Francisco Lopez, Ph.D. is an experienced psychologist who has been the director of the Counseling Department since 2018. Dr. Lopez is committed to the health and well-being of students at Choate as both a faculty adviser to the Student Wellness Committee and a member of the All-School Wellness Committee. In addition, he regularly collaborates with the Department of Equity and Inclusion and the Director of Faculty Professional Development. Recently, we conducted an interview with Dr. Lopez, discussing issues of stress management, mental support, and Choate’s approach to mental health.

Q: How does Choate approach mental health? What resources are available to students seeking mental support?

Dr. Lopez: The mental health of students is a priority for the health center. As a school, and in particular as a health center, we embrace diversity and inclusion, and strive to make the Health Center a safe place for all students. With respect to mental health resources, counseling is available to all students free of charge. Additionally, we have three full-time counselors, as well as a consulting psychiatrist who comes to campus weekly.

Q: What aspects do you find notable in Choate’s Counseling/Wellness program?

Dr. Lopez: The Choate Health Services team is a multidisciplinary, integrated health services team committed to providing students with passionate care and support. We have a remarkable team that includes a physician, pediatric nurse practitioner, full-time counselors, and registered nurses, all of whom are supported by administrative staff and aides. The counseling team works collaboratively with the medical team as we understand the inseparable relationship between mental and physical wellbeing.

Q: What are some changes you’d like to see made to the Wellness/Counseling program?

Dr. Lopez: Members of the health service team, the Adult Wellness Committee, and the Student Wellness Committee are thinking about ways to enhance aspects of the Wellness Program. I, personally, would like to see continued improvement to the content of mental health awareness, gender identity, and sexual health seminars. I would also like to see Choate invite more speakers to talk to the student body regarding pertinent issues.

Q: What advice would you give to students undergoing emotional and academic stress at Choate?

Dr. Lopez: Firstly, maintaining healthy routines, such as adequate sleep, proper nutrition, and social contact, is integral for proper health and wellbeing.

In addition, it is important to reach out to trusted adults and teachers when your stress becomes overwhelming. It is okay to request to chat—the faculty at Choate are super supportive and would love to be there to listen to your struggles.

Moreover, student life at Choate can be very busy. When you’re experiencing stress from the amount of tasks and commitments you are facing, budgeting time can be a very helpful habit to develop. This involves prioritizing your assignments, scheduling tasks, and making to-do lists. Budgeting your time will help you feel more in control and help limit the feeling of being academically overwhelmed.

Lastly, take deep breaths! Finding personal ways to relieve stress and calm down will help you physically and mentally approach your next task.
There once was a time where grades mattered very little to us as students. When did we begin to care more? For many students, the focus on grades began to intensify as we graduated from elementary school. Since the beginning of 6th grade, graded assessments of all kinds began inching into our lives. Individuals measured themselves academically based on the SSATs, ISEEs, APs, SATs, and ACTs. Think back to your own experiences. When did you begin to focus as much as you do on your grades? Do you experience elevated levels of happiness (and possibly self-esteem) upon receiving good grades, and vice versa upon receiving poor ones? Most importantly, how big a role do grades play in your daily life?

Research shows that grades hold the potential to change our world- ly perspectives. “Views that we hold dear can be changed by a simple number or letter,” says Dr. Laurie Santos, a professor of psychology at Yale University, when describing the study done by Robert Bostrom on the potential effects of grades as a reinforcement contingency (1). Bostrom had university students write an argumentative paper on a topic of current events that they opposed. He gave a third of the students no grade, another third a D, and the remaining students an A to see how the letter grade would affect their stance on the topic. The research concluded that students who received an A were less likely to change their viewpoints as opposed to the students who received low grades or no grade at all (1). This demonstrates that grades have the power to consolidate or alter our perspectives and fundamental viewpoints of the world. Students aren’t the only population who deal with grades—Adults do too. Even for things as simple as Yelp ratings or FitBit activity awards, graded ratings significantly influence our mental health and self-perception. Poor outcomes in graded ratings have the potential to induce frustration, stress, and in extreme cases, depression (2).

We partake in a society in which individuals are constantly evaluated based on their performances, ranging from daily tasks to academic tests. As times advance, this trend will only intensify as more fall victim to the constant stress and impairments caused by the frequent numerical evaluation of our actions and performances. It is significant, therefore, to stop occasionally and consider the question—are you placing too much emphasis on the given grades of your life?

**Sources**


Choate and Mental Health: the Fear of Seeking Support

By Nadia Balduf ’22
“Don’t go to counseling!”
“People who go on medical leave never come back.”

Similar utterances entered my ears during the first few weeks of my freshman year at Choate, as if they were the most casual conversation on campus. Even prefects recommended I talk to friends, family, or advisors before turning to Choate’s counseling service if I encountered a mental health issue. This “advice” seemed unfathomable to me: if the counseling team is there to offer care to the student body, why should anyone fear to reach out? The answer is rooted in the stigmatization of mental health consultation, which is present both on campus and in society.

Social media platforms often spread content that portrays mental disorders with negative connotations. Only on a much smaller scale can one find posts that help destigmatize mental health and debunk stereotypes. According to the World Psychiatry Association (WPA), there are three prominent misconceptions associated with mental illness in film and print media (1).

First, people suffering from mental disorders should be feared and excluded from communities; second, mental health patients are unreliable and irresponsible; and finally, mental illnesses make one less mature and incapable of adapting to “normal” society (1). These misconceptions are conveyed through the content we consume daily, which subconsciously influences our perception of mental health. People are much less likely to seek professional help when they fear being cast out from the groups they wish to remain in. If the media portrays having mental illnesses as a burden onto others, people suffering from mental illness may be less likely to seek help due to fear of being dismissed by their social groups. This self-stigmatization, in turn, results in even greater levels of insecurity and low self-esteem, possibly aggravating the original conditions.

Additionally, people with mental illnesses are often discriminated against in workplaces and educational institutions. If one is not mentally stable enough to fully engage in their professional or academic career, devastating repercussions often follow. Many of these current systems do not include or accept individuals who may be struggling with mental illnesses. Even though mental health discrimination is illegal, it is both common and difficult to detect (2). Frequently, workers who seek out help are dismissed because the situation is too difficult for the company to handle. A similar situation is occurring with Choate’s medical leave policy, which advises individuals with severe mental health issues to take time away from the academic and social pressure on campus. Instead of utilizing the benefits of taking a break and a step away from academics, a growing number of students fear that their futures will be stripped away the moment they admit that they are feeling mentally unwell.

So, what can the Choate community do to combat these issues?

First, we can tackle the negative stereotypes on mass media by promoting positive and accurate messages about mental health. Though Choate has made progressive strides in promoting counseling services this year, it would be great to see more posters around campus or posts on social media that highlight helpful resources or information related to mental health. Through continuous promotion and normalization of Choate’s counseling services and the Assessment Team, students may feel less worried about being judged by their peers when seeking help.

Additionally, mental health days and deadline extensions at difficult times should become more widely accepted on campus. Teachers should make it clear to students that they are willing to support them and accommodate any mental health needs. Surrounded by high-achieving individuals, it is crucial to emphasize self-care while encouraging academic excellence. While our collective sentiment around mental health issues cannot be changed in a day, we can take gradual steps toward the de-stigmatization of mental healthcare.

Overall, the Choate community as a whole should work together to create a more accepting space where students in need feel encouraged and comfortable.

Sources
DO SCREENS CAUSE MORE HARM THAN WE THINK?

By Prim Tangkaravakoon ’24

Today, children and adults alike spend hours upon hours consumed by their screens. Humans are increasingly dependent on technology usage in their daily lives, especially under the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Statistics from Common Sense Media show that roughly 50% of children under 8 have a tablet device and average 2.25 hours of screen time per day (1). Screen time refers to time spent on devices like smartphones, computers and televisions. Overall, the average American spends more than seven hours on a screen each day. These alarming statistics prompted further research and demonstrated the negative impact on human’s physical and mental wellness.

One of the most severe consequences following excessive screen time is altered brain structure. Studies show that long exposure to electronic devices causes grey matter atrophy — the shrinking or loss of tissue volume in areas of cognitive processing. This volume loss is found in areas including the frontal lobe (responsible for controlling important cognitive skills in humans) as well as the striatum (responsible for controlling cognition, reward, and coordinated movements). Most concerning of all, is the damage to the insula, which is involved in the development of empathy, compassion, and the ability to combine emotion with physical signals (2).

Apart from influencing grey matter, excessive screen time can also affect white matter, a vital part of the brain’s signal communication that transmits signals between brain areas and body structure. This change in human cognition associated with white matter alteration is known as neuroplasticity — the ability to rewire the brain’s circuitry, vital for both everyday learning and recovering from injury. During this process, the brain will grow new neural pathways and remove the ones not utilized enough. Once the integrity of white matter is compromised, individuals will suffer from lower concentration, short-er memory, weaker impulse control, and slower information processing ability (2).

For children, whose brains are still developing, loss of cognitive ability has become a major concern, as it can impact their learning abilities. Early data from a 2018 study by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) suggests that “children who spent more than two hours a day on screen time activities scored lower on language and thinking tests” (1). Furthermore, studies show that children who watch many hours of television during their elementary school years perform worse on reading tests and may have attention problems. This is because excessive screen time hinders child brain development and keeps them from being active and engaged (3). Most alarmingly, a study supported by the NIH found that pre-teens who spent more than seven hours on screens consequently experienced a thinning of the brain cortex, which is crucial for critical thinking and reasoning (1).

Long hours of screen time can take a toll on our mental wellbeing, especially during the pandemic. Confined indoors due to Covid-19, surging hours of screen time for academic, entertainment, and social purposes can greatly impact teenagers’ sleep schedules. Not only does the blue light emitted from screens inhibit the production of melatonin — a sleep hormone — but exciting and addictive activities on these electronic devices keep one’s body and brain more alert and active (3). Moreover, studies show that higher levels of screen time directly correlate with depression and anxiety (4). In addition, long hours on screens reduce the user’s ability to focus and engage in social interactions. Trapped in a solitary room and immersed in the digital world, individuals have almost no real-life connection with others. For children, this impact is worse, as they lose the crucial opportunity to develop social skills by playing with their peers (3).

In the era of Covid-19, communication methods that utilize screens will only become more and more prevalent. Therefore, it is absolutely crucial that we familiarize ourselves with the dangers of excessive screen time and aim for a healthier usage of our electronics.

Sources


Have you ever scrolled through your Instagram feed and looked at your peers’ beach photos while checking yourself out in the mirror hanging on the wall, wondering why your body is not as perfect? Or has a beauty commercial sponsored by your favorite celebrity ever caused you to purchase an unnecessary product, simply to look more like them? Many teenagers nowadays experience body image insecurities or appearance anxiety. The rise of social media usage accounts for such insecurities and anxieties (1). The idea that social media is detrimental to our mental health is no longer unfamiliar. Yet, platforms such as Instagram and TikTok often promote unattainable beauty standards. Body image issues have gradually become one of the most severe mental crises plaguing teenagers of the digital era (1).

Firstly, why are teenagers more likely to suffer from body image issues due to social media? Part of the reason lies with the physical and mental vulnerabilities of teenagers (1). Adolescents face increased decision making, peer pressure, and compulsion to discover their identities (2). Under these circumstances, outside influences such as social media have a strong impact on the developing minds of teenagers, altering their perspectives on appearance (1). As a result, many teenagers develop unattainable beauty standards based on photoshopped images of the figures they admire (3, 4).

In addition, teenagers’ perception of their own beauty is mostly based on critiques given by the outside world (1). Cyberbullying and hateful comments severely harm the confidence of teenagers, causing severe body anxiety and even leading to mental illnesses such as depression (5).

As mentioned earlier, many social media posts are altered (6). Online bloggers and beauty advertisements may modify images to exaggerate the efficacy of the products to attract more buyers. These exaggerated media promotions may have little effect on adults, but they are very effective on teenagers, whose cognition is still developing. Seeing their favorite bloggers and influencers promote exaggerated dieting methods or beauty products, teens may be encouraged to follow the “advice” of said influencers to achieve the same goals (4).

As we understand how social media leads to body anxiety, what are some of the ways of resolving this problem? First of all, educate yourself and others about how social media depicts an unrealistic body image and how these beauty standards are in fact unattainable. Also, deploying cognitive behavior skills such as challenging extreme comments on oneself might help regain self confidence as well (7). Lastly, take breaks from social media occasionally. Use that time for something more meaningful, or invest it into healthy activities that you genuinely enjoy, such as reading books, hiking, or working out. Recent studies also suggest using a method (which may sound counterintuitive) called “mirror meditation” in which you stare at your reflection, eye to eye (8).

By Summer Xu ’22

SOCIAL MEDIA AND APPEARANCE ANXIETY

Sources
One of the most apparent advantages of social media is the ability to connect with friends and maintain relationships. Under the pandemic, everyone is distanced from each other both physically and psychologically. It feels arduous to preserve existing friendships, let alone initiate new ones. Whether remote learning from home or studying on campus, social media awards the ability to continue to nurture relationships with other students. Additionally, it fosters connections with like-minded people of similar interests, providing users with the ability to engage in conversations they might not have otherwise. A study run by the Pew Research Center revealed that 57% of teens ages 13 to 17 have made a new friend online in the past year, while 29% of teens indicated that they had made more than five new friends (1). Social media allows us to feel the pleasure of connecting with others without the stress of face-to-face confrontation.

Another benefit attributed to social media is its widespread influence and encouragement of positive social changes. An amusing but illustrative example of this occurred in January 2021, when an advertising company posted a simple photo of an egg on Instagram. The sole intention was for it to become the most-liked picture ever on the platform, a goal achieved in only nine days with 52 million likes. Now, the exceptional part is what happened next: after this egg made global headlines, it "cracked under the pressure," raising awareness about mental health and encouraging others to speak up if they are struggling. Since the campaign launch, the company behind the stunt has set up a website with useful mental health information to promote help-seeking behavior (2).

This leads to another advantage of social media—the destigmatization of mental health, race, culture, gender expression, sexuality, and other aspects of social justice. From spreading information about rallies to sharing stories of inequity and prejudice worldwide, there are unlimited ways to educate and uplift others through social media. By accessing the online content, teenagers are educating themselves on the current circumstances of the world and becoming inspired to solve problems they may not have been aware of otherwise.

A final asset of social media is the freedom to showcase one’s creativity and personal narrative. Social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok can be great spaces to share one’s art or talent with the world. Anyone can set up an account and post their ideas in minutes, from anywhere at any time. The users who are exposed to the passions of others online will be inspired to develop their own, ultimately creating an environment which cultivates all forms of self-expression (3).
Cons:

With every advantage, comes a corresponding downfall. While social media can strengthen friendships and foster connections, it also exponentially increases feelings of loneliness and isolation. As illustrated by social displacement theory, the more time people spend on social media, the less likely they are to interact with the real world. A research run by Erik Peper, the Associate Professor of Health Education at San Francisco State University, found that people who spend more time on social media every day feel more alienated than those who check their social media less. The survey also revealed that people who are on their phones more often are more prone to anxiety, depression, and feelings of withdrawal or disconnection (2).

Some of the anxiety and loneliness that a social media user might experience stems from another issue, known as the spreading of fake news. It is very easy to take advantage of the liberty and influence of social media for unethical purposes. Nowadays, anyone with a computer or smartphone has the ability to dispense information behind an anonymous profile. When used responsibly, social media has the potential to create powerful social change through education and empowerment, but irresponsible actions online can lead to damaging repercussions (4). The ones who absorb the untruthful content might go on and spread it to more people, creating a vicious cycle of misinformation. The immediate impact might not be apparent, but a long-term exposure to bias or deceit could subconsciously change the values of a considerable population.

Social media’s significant influence is connected with another problem: comparison and the damage of self-image. With a meticulously designed profile, it is easy to create the image of a “perfect” life, which is far from reality. Viewers can be made to believe in the fabrication and compare their own situations with a seemingly more desirable but unrealistic one. From influencers promoting ‘tummy tea,’ to fitness models posting their daily workout routines, the majority of social media consists of one’s “highlight reel,” the most desirable or palatable parts of their life. These “cherry-picked” contents can make one feel inadequate, and the resulting loss of self-esteem can lead to severe psychological and physical issues, including anxiety and depression. This adverse impact provides a convincing narrative to counter the benefit of creating a safe space through destigmatization.

Finally, although social media allows for creative expression, it also poses privacy risks. With every public post containing personal information, there is a risk for the user to be exploited by predators. Even if it is not a threat to one’s safety, publicity still exposes one to the dangers of cyber-bullying. If one shares their prized possessions or proud achievements only to be met with malicious comments, their self-confidence could be crushed. The loss of self-esteem will not only plummet one’s motivation to improve, but might also lead to more severe mental disorders (3).

Sources


Over the past year, the effects of systemic racism have become more apparent than ever in both the US and within Choate. From the killing of George Floyd to last year’s campus shooting threat, from increased violence against Asian Americans to microaggressions experienced daily in the classroom, Choate students are all too familiar with the isolating and damaging effects of racism. These effects are part of a phenomenon known as racial trauma or race-based traumatic stress (RBTS)—the mental and emotional damage caused by racially charged encounters and discrimination (1). Exploring the causes and symptoms of RBTS can better assist in our understanding of racism’s impact as a whole.

Causes of RBTS include exposure to stereotypes, racial abuse, and other forms of discrimination like witnessing racial abuse—whether it be in person or through the media—and fearing for one’s safety because of one’s race. The symptoms of racial trauma can also be exacerbated by denying its existence, downplaying its effects, or questioning the experiences that led to it. Racial trauma does not just manifest in racially charged situations, but rather permeates every aspect of the victims’ life. The symptoms of RBTS are similar to those of PTSD, including anxiety, depression, hypervigilance, avoidance of triggers, and increased sensitivity to racism. Intense racial trauma can also have physical effects, like digestive issues, cardiovascular diseases, and hypertension (1).

Like many race-related issues, RBTS is deeply tied with intersectionality. People who belong to multiple marginalized groups are the most susceptible to the symptoms of RBTS. According to a 2019 study by S.K. Dale and S.A. Saffren, the symptoms of RBTS were more prevalent among Black women with HIV than those who were discriminated against for race, gender, or HIV status alone (2). Similarly, a 2018 study found that LGBTQ+ Asian Americans faced unique obstacles that could lead to more stress and trauma than that experienced by their cisgender, heterosexual counterparts (3).

The first step in coping with racial trauma is always being aware of the symptoms and recognizing its effect on one’s own life. It’s critical to feel seen and heard when moving past racial trauma. In a 2019 study of African American women, it was found that those who experienced racism and kept it to themselves had shorter telomeres—an indicator of stress—than those who reported their experiences to others (4).

The journey to healing is long, but is made infinitely easier by confiding in trusted peers and engaging in racially conscious conversations. Although Choate’s creation of Community Conversations has certainly aided the process, it must continue elsewhere as well. Whether it be in the classroom, dining hall, or dorms, being aware of racial trauma in our conversations helps us become more socially conscious of others’ experiences and better comprehend the effects of systemic racism on its victims.

**Sources**


The Sun is Out, Good Mental Health is In!

By Juliet Ainsley ’22

There is a feeling on campus like no other when it’s a bright, sunny day. The sun is out, the flowers are blooming, and the weather is getting warmer. As sunlight comes, energy increases and mood lifts. Parents are not wrong when they encourage their children to go outside to boost their mood: the sun has a significant positive effect on our overall well-being. The first sign of spring is marked by the gradual increase in daylight. In the month of March alone, just over three minutes of daylight are gained everyday (1). This increase in daylight has many positive effects on a human’s body and brain. Exposure to sunlight triggers the release of serotonin in the brain, a hormone that serves as a mood booster and calmer, commonly referred to as “the happy chemical” due to its significant contributions to wellbeing and happiness (2). When there is a serotonin deficit (especially during the winter months), they may experience feelings of depression. Low levels of serotonin are associated with a higher risk of major depression with a seasonal pattern, known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) (2). Sunlight, whether it be natural or artificial through light therapy, is the prevention and treatment for SAD and simpler feelings of depression (2).

According to a study done by researchers at Brigham Young University (BYU), decreased mental health distress during the brighter seasons is due to the amount of sunlight, not the exact weather (3). There is an assumption that rainy days cause mental health distress due to the lack of sunlight, yet that is not the case. In this same study, researchers observed rainy, cloudy, and polluted days and found that the one significant piece of data that influenced mental health levels was the amount of time spanning between sunrise and sunset (3). With the gradual increase in daylight throughout the spring, rainy days may feel less stressful than snowy days in Winter — mainly due to the increase in sunlight. According to a large observational study in Texas with 20,818 participants, there is no significant correlation between mood and temperature (4). The happiness felt on a warm day after many cold days is fleeting, but it can still provide comfort and relief.

Even though sunlight and the outdoors have so many benefits to the human body and mind, people tend to spend more time indoors due to lifestyle preferences. In developed nations, people spend 93% of their time indoors (4). Although work, school, and most of life happens indoors, spending just 10-15 minutes outdoors everyday in the sun can be beneficial to one’s mental and physical health. At Choate, try walking the long way to class or chatting with friends outdoors. Incorporating small moments throughout the day to be outside and capture the benefits of sunlight will improve your mood, mental stability, focus, and creativity.

Sources


In the first four months of 2021 alone, there were around 170 mass shootings in the United States, resulting in almost 15,000 deaths and 12,000 injuries (1). However, the toll of these harrowing events is not solely physical; survivors and bystanders feel serious mental health repercussions as a result of these mass shootings. Although it may seem obvious that mass shootings have negative effects, the full extent of their impacts on mental health are often overlooked.

According to Brady United, “...up to 95 percent of people exposed to mass shootings experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the early days after the incident, and most of those individuals feel the psychological effects of the trauma months later” (2). The resulting complications take on many forms, including substance abuse, self-harm, and depression.

For instance, Nardyne Jeffries lost her 16-year-old daughter Brishell Jones in a 2013 mass shooting in Washington, D.C. She later revealed that being the parent of someone who was killed in a mass shooting “has made [her] PTSD and anxiety disorder non-stop” (3). Every other shooting afterwards brought back the horror and sorrow of losing her daughter, irreversibly causing her mental harm and stress.

There are many more examples of the ripple effect mass shootings can have. In the 1999 Columbine school shooting, Austin Eubanks was shot twice (3). Although he survived the bullets, Eubanks struggled with addiction as a result of the trauma, dying 20 years later due to an overdose.

Jeffries’s and Eubanks’s experiences, though agonizing, are not anomalies. Brady United points out...
that “survivors of mass shootings experience mental health consequences at significantly higher rates than those exposed to other types of trauma, such as natural disasters” (3). Even so, many survivors feel guilt or shame in seeking help for not having physical wounds; this includes survivor’s guilt, a mental condition that occurs when a person believes they have done something wrong by surviving a traumatic or tragic event (6). Without a visual sign of trauma, the survivors often feel less deserving of treatment despite the pain and despair they suffer.

The psychological impact of mass shootings is even more severe on children—which is very alarming considering the frequency of school shootings. Early exposure to violence can affect a child’s development and alter the course of their life. Children who witness mass shootings tend to develop absenteeism—where one regularly stays away from work or school without good reason, isolates, and has difficulty in focusing (4). When students have to return to classes with traumatic memories, it is near-impossible to regain a sense of normalcy.

While many schools respond by increasing the level of security in order to alleviate fear after a mass shooting, it often backfires. A New Jersey teenager expressed to the New York Times that “the armed guard who patrols the entrance to my school doesn’t bring our students comfort or relief; he only serves as a stark reminder of the constant threat of a mass murder.” (3). The psychological trauma of mass shootings is clearly pervasive and devastating, the effects are still under-recognized. According to USA Today, “From 1998 to 2012, the number of publications about gun violence declined 64%” (5). For 25 years, the U.S. Government froze gun safety research. Congress passed the Dickey Amendment in 1996, which forbids the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to “advocate or promote gun control” (5). This has led to a lack of comprehensive treatment for gun violence survivors and a lack of easily available information on the effects of mass shootings.

Norman Williams, the father of a teen who was killed in a Washington D.C. school shooting, told The Washington Post in 2018: “This isn’t the first mass shooting. This isn’t the first school shooting. We’ve been calling for gun change for years, and no one has listened to us” (3). In December 2019, U.S. Congress finally approved $25 million of funding for CDC and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study gun safety. While preventing mass shootings and treating survivors certainly require an arduous process of study, it is encouraging to see proper steps being taken in the right direction. The significant mental effects of mass shootings can no longer be ignored, and the severity of these effects are exactly why they must be further explored—a first step to healing.

**Sources**
